Simplex zoning plan nears vote

(Continued from page 1) Sullivan and Councillors Sheila Russell and William Walsh will support the package unamended. Obstacles to the re-zoning package arose last month when the city's Planning Board came into conflict with the Community Development Department, which drafted the package in cooperation with Forest City, MIT's developer for the site. The Planning Board called for a 25 percent lower ceiling on development, claiming the project would bring traffic congestion and pollution; a compromise was reached and sent to the council in mid-December. In the last week of December, two councilors said the revisions were too complex and the petition should be refiled, which would delay it up to three months. But on Dec. 28 the council voted 8-2, with two abstentions, to send it to a "second reading," i.e. a final vote, at its next meeting.

Turning point in 20-year saga

This vote is one of the last steps in the breaking of a long stalemate over the development of the 27-acre area. MIT has owned the Simplex site since 1969, but did not name a developer until 1983. The re-zoning proposal is the concrete outcome of a Blue Ribbon Committee report to the council a year ago, which outlined recommendations for the entire Cambridgeport Industrial District, including Simplex.

Neighborhood activists have fought MIT for two decades, claiming that too many new high-tech professional jobs would drive rents up and disrupt the adjacent blue-collar community. Over the years, MIT has agreed to include housing on the site, with some reserved for low- and moderate-income tenants. MIT plans to build a $250 million "University Park" including commercial space, research and development, light industry and housing on the site of the old wire and cable factory, which is now zoned for industry only. The re-zoning would create a new zone allowing mixed use, with a maximum set on development.

The proposed zoning ordinance specifications:

- A minimum of 400 units of housing of which 100 must be for low-income families and 50 for moderate-income families.
- A maximum of 1700 vehicle trips to and from the development per day.
- 100,000 feet of open public space.
- The project will be reviewed at two intermediate stages of development, and must have certain numbers of housing units at these reviews.

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If someone doesn't do something, you'll just die.
Be a Peace Corps volunteer

This space donated by New York.

Hug a friend to quit too.

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Exercise to relieve the tension.

Try the "buddy system," and ask a friend to quit too.

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